

laughing horse

No. 5

two-bits

The Goose-Step

A Study of American Education

BY

Upton Sinclair

A discussion of the administration of
institutions of higher learning in the
interests of Big Business. . . .

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Laughing Horse

A Magazine of Satire from the Pacific Slope

Edited by

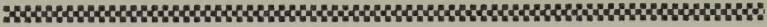
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More Little Flies

By Emanuel Morgan

They tried to shoo the Laughing Horse
Not knowing it had wings
And could turn in air upon his course
Above terrestrial things.

If they had locked him as they wished
And bridled him their way,
His tail could never once have swished
As it easily does today.

Brushing aside the little flies
That buzz around his flanks—
They would like to eat his very eyes
Without a word of thanks.

But the Laughing Horse has wings beyond
Stupidity and stalls,
And leaves the flies and the stagnant pond
With leaps like waterfalls!

"Fiat Lux"



E, in accepting the motto, "Fiat Lux," which the State University has passed on to us, are conscious of the dignity and solemnity it brings along. That the State University found itself unable to live up to such a noble motto is indeed sad and augurs ill for the future of that institution, but that it sought out LAUGHING HORSE as the natural successor is a bit of wisdom that will shine like a gold star in the storm-swept firmament of that university. And before we pass on to larger matters we wish to thank the officers and students of the University of California for their splendid gift of nation-wide publicity, without which, from sheer boredom, we would have been forced to pass on to droller lands.

We continue to be interested in the theory and practice of higher education in America. We continue to delude ourselves into the belief that all is not right with the current theory and practice, that it might be improved for the vast benefit, not only of the students themselves, but of the nation as a whole. We still have a vague notion that university education should be something more than a senseless scramble for grades and units by the students and a ceaseless repetition of hollow and aged platitudes by the professors. We still hold that strange and perverse idea that in the liberal and broad education of a minority lies the cure of some of those maladies that are slowly bringing this nation to premature ruin. We would repeat that we see in that blind and stupid, if not malignant, control, which big business exercises over education, and particularly over higher education, the most sinister force against progress and enlightenment in the world today. Until thought, expression and investigation can be free from all material considerations, until men can be allowed to examine every idea, no matter how iconoclastic or new, and every institution, no matter with what hurt to that institution, without the petty restrictions and childish persecutions of men whose sole ideal is personal aggrandizement, in short, until every one can live his individual intellectual life without consideration of the harm he might do to someone's business, what hope is there that America may become a civilized nation?

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Even the editorials in our most conservative and optimistic journals have a note of uneasiness in them these days. They drop puzzled and rather frightened hints that perhaps there need to be some slight changes and modifications in the order of things. Their complacency and beaming, self-congratulatory smiles are gone; vaguely they wonder why their grandiose predictions about the future of the great American Democracy seems not to have come to pass. But sternly and with warning frowns they take it upon themselves to set things right. It is not for the "radical" and the callow youth to suggest or interfere; he must sit in worshipful silence and listen to their solemn pronouncements. Let men of age and experience, in fact the very men who have been sitting placidly and letting things go to the dogs, adjust things.

I quote this illuminating editorial from the "Minneapolis Tribune:"

"RADICALS NOT WORKERS"

"But in this year 1922, we have long since passed the child's age when it is so easy to 'be good.' We are now studying the higher problems, where one man's meat is another man's poison, and where the tail of a boy's kite over a copper wire puts out the lights in a city a hundred miles away.

"We have the problem of individualism and socialism to settle, the problems of capital and labor, the problems of the right to work and the right to quit work, and a thousand other problems. Shall the government own the railroads and if not, how much latitude is going to be left to private initiative? Shall the government own the coal mines and if not to what extent shall we permit ourselves to be exploited by operators and miners.

"These problems are ours to settle and ours alone. They are problems peculiar to this generation, and however difficult they may seem they are no more difficult than the problems that our fathers solved in their time, and our grandfathers in theirs.

"But who is to solve these problems? Certainly not the Shipsteads, Olesens, Kvaales, Townleys, Bowens, and Mangnus Johnsons, nor any other carping critic, fault-finder or preacher of discontent.

"The problems of this generation are being solved by the men who sit down and study and think and evolve a plan that appears to be workable. Perhaps it proves workable, and perhaps it does not, but it is certain to fall short

of perfection, and to require more study and thought to meet new conditions. Thus we progress.

"Nor is it fair to give all the credit for progress to a limited number of constructive leaders. They but work out what the majority wants done, and the real majority who rule are the men and women who work, not the ones who stand on the street corner listening to soapbox orators. The neighborhood groups of men and women who gather in town and country and quietly discuss what they have heard and read are the real rulers and not the groups who gather either at pink teas or moonshine parties.

"The solving of our present problems takes real work and real thought, and the radical who is merely a faultfinder is a shirk. He has neither the capacity nor the inclination to apply himself to the real solution of a problem, and he does double damage by his hampering of those who would solve them."

And I would also quote this paragraph from James Harvey Robinson's "The Mind in the Making:"

"One awful thing that the Book of the Past makes plain is that with our animal heritage we are singularly oblivious to the large concerns of life. We are keenly sensitive to little discomforts, minor irritations, wounded vanity and various danger signals; but our comprehension is inherently vague and listless when it comes to grasping intricate situations and establishing anything like a fair perspective in life's problems and possibilities. Our imagination is restrained by our own timidity, constantly reinforced by the warnings of our fellows, who are always urging us to be safe and sane, by which they mean convenient for them, predictable in our conduct and graciously amenable to the prevailing standards."

To us, who docilely keep away from Anatole France and his decadent and corrupting irony, who believe that the Bolsheviks should be stood up against a wall and shot, who believe in the suppression by force of the expression of anything but the current prejudices, the news that Dr. George Barton Cutten, President of Colgate College, has announced publicly that he believes democracy a failure well nigh sweeps us off our feet. Quaking we ask: "How long will he last?" When we have recovered our equilibrium we surreptitiously read what he has said. Our world topples about our ears:

"... the idea of democracy is not only founded upon the mistaken theory that all men are born free and equal, but

upon another theory equally unsound: that 'the voice of the people is the voice of God.' It has never been so. The voice of God is the voice of one calling in the wilderness, calling on many to repent. The voice of the people calls, 'Crucify him!'—the voice of God is tabernacled in the person who treads the wine press alone. The divine right of the people has no more foundation than the divine right of kings—and both are wrong. Mankind suffrage has been our greatest and most popular failure, and now we double it by granting universal adult suffrage. We gain nothing by doubling the number, but in some way we must double or quadruple the average intelligence of voters. Of course it was the height of folly to permit people of mental subnormality to vote simply because they were males, or to deny highly intelligent people the privilege simply because they were females; but we have not ameliorated conditions by extending the suffrage to more people of the same mentality. The melting-pot figure has been incorrectly interpreted. There is no alchemy in the melting-pot, as we have discovered. Some apparently thought that if we put gold and silver and copper and iron into the pot the product of the furnace would be gold! We find we have not got rid of an ounce of iron. In fact we find, after a few generations, more iron and less gold."

"The youthful revolutionary, who after all is no more essentially absurd than the elderly conservative, is commonly told by the latter that he too at the same age felt the same aspirations, burnt with the same zeal, and yearned with the same hope until he learnt wisdom with experience—'as you will have, my boy, by the time you are my age.' To the psychologist the kindly contempt of such pronouncements cannot conceal the pathetic jealousy of declining power. Herd instinct, inevitably siding with the majority and the ruling powers, has always added its influence to the side of age and given a very distinctly perceptible bias to history, proverbial wisdom, and folklore against youth and confidence and enterprise and in favor of age and caution, immemorial wisdom of the past, and even the toothless mouthings of senile decay."—W. Trotter in "Instincts of the Herd."

EDITORIAL NOTE:—With the publication of this able and convincing letter from Mr. Upton Sinclair to Mr. David P. Barrows, *LAUGHING HORSE* drops the matter of its attempted suppression. The editors wish to do publicly that which they have already done privately—to thank Mr. Sinclair for his courageous stand for us, or, more properly, for the principles of justice and honesty.

December 14, 1922.

President David P. Barrows,
University of California,
Berkeley, California.

Dear Sir:

I have just learned that you have expelled Roy Chanslor, editor of the "Laughing Horse," upon the charge of having published in his little paper a letter from D. H. Lawrence, the English novelist, whom you described to Chanslor as "decadent, obscene and degenerate." I have many reasons for believing that the reason you have assigned for the expulsion of Chanslor is a pretext, and that the real reason for your action is his reprinting of extracts from chapters of my forthcoming book, "The Goose-Step," dealing with your administration of the University of California. Your action in this matter starts a public fight, which is going to last for a considerable time, I think. It seems proper that I should say something on the subject of your treatment of Chanslor, and say it directly to you.

To begin with, I think that Chanslor's publication of the D. H. Lawrence letter in his paper was a mistake. The letter is a very strong condemnation of a grossly immoral book; the letter was written by one of the most distinguished of living English novelists, and that ought to constitute it a matter of interest to all intelligent people. But Lawrence used certain anatomical words which transplanted English prudery takes exception to, and I think it was foolish to raise this issue, instead of concentrating upon the far more important issue, which is your administration of the university in the interest of capitalist imperialism.

But if it was foolish of Chanslor to publish this letter, it was still more foolish of the student, Butler, to let himself be trapped by your administration into having Chanslor arrested. If we were all to be arrested every time we committed a foolish action, who would there be left to tend the jails? Surely you yourself would have to spend a term in

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jail for the speeches you made to persuade the American people to go to war and conquer the territory of Mexico, at the time when you, a dean of the University of California, were vice-president of the Vera Cruz Land and Cattle Company. Also you would have to serve a term for the speeches that you made when you came back from Russia, advising the American people to stand all the Bolsheviki up against the wall and shoot them; and for your debate in Berkeley, when you urged that the United States should conquer Siberia and turn it over to Kolchak; and for the speeches you made in defense of Semenoff, declaring that you had watched his activities in Siberia and had seen nothing of which you disapproved—this at the very time that a Congressional investigation was bringing out the testimony of American army officers concerning the “thirty most beautiful women,” whom Semenoff had kept in his private car, and concerning the hundred thousand innocent non-combatants whom this Cossack bandit in Japanese pay had slaughtered in your immediate vicinity!

It seems to me, President Barrows, that you were a little too much of the red-blooded man of action in Siberia to pose now successfully as a virgin-minded prude in this Chanslor case. I have had many students tell me about moral conditions at your university, and about things that go on in university circles, with full knowledge of the administration. For example, this Chanslor case brings me a letter from a man who was recently a student, who states as follows:

“How Barrows can have the face to expel any student from the university for obscenity is quite beyond me! I, myself, saw Barrows sit through a ‘Smoker Rally’ (the men’s rally before the Big Game with Stanford) at which the football coaches and prominent alumni told the most vulgar and filthy stories that anyone ever heard. The speaker of the evening, an alumni from Pasadena, told one story that I remember that one would hear only in the coarsest society. Moreover, the campus comic monthly, ‘The Pelican,’ prints thinly disguised obscenities of all sorts that is countenanced without a murmur. Yet Barrows solemnly upbraided Chanslor for printing this frank, straightforward and really highly moral letter. Apparently everyone has been cautioned not to let any indignation over your exposé creep into the case again.”

Also, while I am on this subject, I will quote a paragraph from the very dignified and capable letter addressed to you by Roy Chanslor immediately after his expulsion. I

don't see how anyone can read this paragraph and not see reflected in it a high-minded and courageous young man, confronted with an act, not merely of tyranny, but of hypocrisy. I quote:

"You have apparently confused the sincere and fine and beautiful expression of a great artist and a brilliant and original thinker with the crude vulgarities and obvious obscenities regularly on tap at smoker rallies and with the corrupt literature which I have heard is sold to those who desire it by bell-boys and train boys. At the smoker rally held late in November, the night before the annual California-Stanford football game, it did not strike my attention that you did anything to stop the bawdy stories and the frankly vulgar exhibition of dancing which a student in black-face gave with a dummy stuffed to represent a woman, but it did strike my attention that you sat through the spectacle in a seat in the front row, tacitly, by your silence, countenancing the whole affair. This spectacle which was frankly vulgar and obscene apparently did not arouse in you any of the moral indignation which the letter of Mr. Lawrence did, a letter which I repeat is not obscene or corrupt or degenerate, but fine and sincere and beautiful."

So much for moral conditions under your administration of the University of the Black Hand. In view of these facts, I fully believe, and I publicly charge, that your action against Roy Chanslor was taken because of his reprinting of the passages from "The Goose-Step." My book will be out before long, and the public will have an opportunity to judge between you and me. You have, of course, read the extracts published in the "Laughing Horse," and you doubtless read the complete passages which I sent you a month or so ago, when they were published in the "Appeal to Reason." You also read the letter which I wrote you many months ago, giving you an opportunity to defend yourself on one particular point in this controversy. That letter discussed an article of yours published in the University of California "Chronicle" for April, 1922, entitled "What Are the Prospects of the University Professor?" In this article you laid out in minute detail the career which you plan for your faculty under the regime of the Goose-Step. I was especially interested in one point of your schedule, and I wrote you a letter, which I was careful to make as courteous in tone as possible. I quote the essential portions of this letter:

"You state the salary of the young instructor, and say: 'It has permitted him to marry and to provide for the birth

of one or more children.' The question which this suggests to me, and which you do not answer, is, how many more children? Manifestly, the salary suggested would not make possible the raising of more than two, or three at the outside; but the young professor is 29 or 30 years of age, and he might have eight or ten children. What I should like to know is, what would happen to him if he did so? It is a fact that most of your professors don't and there seems to be in your article the implicit understanding that they mustn't; so I am forced to assume that you favor what is known as Birth Control, and tacitly recommend it. I am one of those who believe that the methods of Birth Control ought to be made known, not merely to the cultured classes, but to the working classes, and I should like to know the stand of the president of the University of California on this subject. Will you answer for publication these two specific questions: First, do you recognize that your article implies the prevention of conception by the married instructors of your university? Second, would you advocate legislation to permit working class families to obtain a knowledge of these same methods?"

Now, you are usually rather free in taking part in public controversies, but for some reason you thought it best not to answer this letter. A month or two ago, when it appeared in serial form, a reporter from the San Francisco "Daily News" called to see you about it, and he quotes you as follows:

"As for Upton Sinclair, I received a lengthy letter from him not long ago asking me to debate on some very stupid subjects. As there seemed to be no sense in the letter, I paid no attention to him."

Such is your comment upon my letter, and I am quite willing to leave the issue to the general public for judgment. In my book I am demonstrating, among other things, the thesis that presidents of colleges and universities are almost invariably men who do not always tell the truth, and I am venturing to assert that this statement of yours definitely puts you in that classification. I assert it as something manifest to every intelligent person: the reason you refrained from paying any attention to my letter was not because you saw no sense in it, but, on the contrary, because you saw too much sense in it; in other words, because I had you in a trap, and there was nothing you could answer.

It is something I have frequently observed concerning the conduct of the retainers of special privilege: when you

take the trouble to get the facts and leave them no possible answer, they suddenly remember their dignity and stand resolutely upon it. I have seen half a dozen newspaper interviews with you, in which you declined to say anything about any of my "Goose-Step" chapters, and I take this as a tribute to the carefulness with which I have done my work. Thus, the Oakland "Tribune" for November 29th reports you as having read my articles before they appeared in the "Laughing Horse," and to be "unperturbed" by them. Well, Colonel Barrows, it is an excellent thing for a military man to be unperturbed during a battle, but that does not always keep him from losing the battle, and already there are signs that you are not having this battle entirely your own way. I close this letter by calling your attention to the enclosed paragraphs from an editorial in one of your respectable student newspapers, "The Pelican."

I do not see how there is anything that can be added to this very intelligent student editorial. I do not ask the students of the University of California to "defend" my "article." I only ask them to read it, and consider it, and investigate its statements—which means that they should demand of the president of the University of California that he either disprove the charges, or else stand convicted before the people of this state as a henchman of organized greed, instead of a servant of truth and social justice.

Yours very truly,

Upton Sinclair.

"It is enough, and it is no small thing at that, to have transmuted a truth into a non-truth. The higher calling of criticism is not even, as Pierre Bayle proclaimed, to sow doubts, it must destroy. The intelligence is an excellent instrument of negation. It is time to employ it, and so stop trying to rear palaces with picks and torches."—Remy de Gourmont.

"It is not American thought so much as American thinkers that we want."—Dr. W. T. Harris.

Truth

By Paul Tanaquil.

I can hear your mad retort:
"Being selfish, you will never
Love save as a last resort
From ennui of being clever!"

And I who blunder, I who grope
Wasting this my precious youth,
In an ineffectual hope
Of attaining concrete truth,
I who grope and I who blunder
Chasing will o'wisps till day
Tremble, for the answer under
Words I did not dare to say:

"Truth is dark eyes . . . quiet laughter . .
Kind hands . . . and in hair a gleam
Suddenly . . . and vanished after,
Truth is but a dream."

Exoticism in the Home



SEASON or so ago everyone was reverting to the literature of Polynesia . . . or at least everyone was hearing about Mystic Isles, White Shadows, Emperor Joneses, and a few reverted to Stevenson, Stoddard and Melville. Captain Traprock stemmed the tide, but next year the southeastern corner of the Sahara, Green Mansions sou' sou' west of Hudson's, or more Beasts, Men and Gods from China will be thrilling the gullible faddists, and the wandering minds of the race will be off again.

Why does not someone devise a scheme whereby even the most tame and unimaginative cromo may learn to create his own escape from the hum-drum, by means of some simple lessons in Exoticism in the Home?

Considering the fact that unhappiness, divorce, insanity, drunkenness, and thousands of other curses in our so-called civilized society today, are caused by a complete absence of imagination, an utter lack in the individual of ability to create a world of his own in order to escape the banalities, and the stunting monotony of Babbity—this system should prove invaluable.

The first step necessary would be to absolutely rid the mind of prejudice, all conventional habits of thought, preconceptions and pre-natal as well as adolescent influences. To do this the patient would have to sit in a dark room for an hour every day and imagine he is not what he is, that he is, in fact, not himself at all; and then should observe what his subconscious mind substitutes for himself.

Thus it could be ascertained what his submerged ego desires that he should be, and he would immediately be enabled to carry out that desire in the privacy of his own home, liberating what may have been a dangerous repression, and alleviating the necessity of being or becoming unhappy, divorced, insane, or drunk, which are respectively too uncomfortable, notorious, inconvenient, and expensive to be desirable.

Adoption of this system would conclusively prove that dualism is the solution of the problem of happiness. And I do not imply by that duplicity. Far from it. That is exactly what my suggested system is not. It is the recog-

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nizance of duality in personality, the legalization of Mr. Hyde, the emancipation of humanity.

I am far too lazy to carry out the suggestion myself, but the field should be a fertile one, and the possibilities inexhaustible. The motto of my principles would be: Every Home a Mad-house!

What a relief it would be. . . .

"The 'good citizens' are the chief enemies of goodness; the men of 'blameless' lives' are the high priests of wrongs that affront the skies, that blaspheme the universe, and that make the very stones cry out against the sufferings of men."

Alex in Wonderland



SAW A MAN today who wore a blood-jade bracelet on his left arm waiting to be offered \$650 for it, and I saw the frail skeleton of a skyscraper etching rectangles into a turquoise sky. I saw a polychromatic chimera, a purple alley, a pair of wondrous cornelian ear-drops, the insane faces of hundreds of people, the painting of a carmillion cliff-city worth \$3500 (the painting, not the city). I saw a friend, an orange new moon like a copper bowl dipping into the Pacific, a room lighted with 15 candles, twenty-five naked boys in a pool of green water, a tall vaulted library lit with a red glow and full of hundreds of books, a drizzle of rain against a grey window pane, and the gurgle of water in a gutter on the roof. I saw a beautiful woman with white hair standing beside a young girl with black eyes. And I saw cigarette smoke, coiling blue from the tip of a brown cylinder in my fingers and bellowing grey from my mouth a few moments later. I saw distances and detailed close-ups, vague generalities and specific nonentities. I saw a city piled up on a hill under a smoky rose sky.

And yet people go to the movies!

Revolt

By George Cronyn.

REVOLT is not so much a sign of youth as its privilege and necessity. It is a necessary assertion of distinction from the parent, the teacher, the indistinguishable mass. This affirmation of a separate entity begins at birth, with the physical breaking away of the child from the mother. "The child kicks away, into independence. It stiffens its spine in the strength of its own private and separate, inviolable existence. It will admit of no trespass. It is awake now in a new pride, a new self-assertion. The sense of antagonistic freedom is aroused." (D. H. Lawrence.)

Stiffening of the spine against the mother is the first rebellious act of every individual. Then begins between these two a struggle, of the one for power and possession, of the other for the development of the ego to a normal maturity. The two natures grow by mutual opposition. If the parent yields, the child becomes a tyrant; if the child capitulates, he is doomed to become, at maturity a person of dwarfed and stunted psychic growth; or the attempt to find, too late, room for the expansion of the cramped ego, may result in some perversion, criminality or madness. Many of these parentally restricted individuals never arrive at real maturity. They may become housewives, raise families, achieve success as business men, may be pointed to as the "pillars of society," and remain, nevertheless, children, with childish reactions to emotional and psychic situations.

If neither parent nor child can yield safely to the demands of the other, what basis of compromise is there to effect an amicable adjustment? Let it be said first that many of the restrictions imposed by parents and teachers are in the nature of defensive barriers against annoyance. Others are the expression of some thwarted parental ideal. The parent enjoys quiet, therefore the children must be subdued to insure it. The father desires his son to be like himself, to insure a further expansion of his own ego, through that of son, into the future; or else he plans a career for the boy that he was unable to achieve himself and so takes a vicarious pleasure in its achievement by "his" offspring. As though procreation implied ownership! The parent in all


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this is seeking the fulfillment of his "libido" (functional current) regardless of the native tendency of the being he accidentally brought into the world.

"The chief problem in social living is the externalization of the libido in such a way that all the individuals composing society may live their lives to the utmost. The obstructions which individuals and society place in the way are not all necessary. If the unnecessary ones were entirely removed from the lives of children the next generation would be a superior type of humanity." (Elida Evans: *Problem of the Nervous Child*.)

Adolescence, with the normal child, as it is the age of blossoming personality, is the period when latent rebelliousness flares up pronouncedly. The boy and girl of high school age are ever ready to assert themselves in some manner against school, home, or whatever represents an obstruction to this new intensity of self, this fresh energy of "I-am-ness." They are beginning to question tradition, in dress, conduct, ideas. The parent is exasperated. This model youth of his gives indications of a character foreign to the father's conception of what it ought to be; and the latter decides it must come from the mother's side. Defeated in his attempt to uproot these unfamiliar and—to him, dangerous symptoms of incorrigibility, he looks about wildly for external aid in the struggle and enlists teacher, principal, or the student military unit. If the boy can be made to submit to the discipline of the military command, he will have learned that greatest desideratum for the young: **unquestioning** obedience. In short, this expanding individuality must be contracted so that it may not threaten the extravagant self-assertion of the older ego.


In many cases this significant gesture of dissent on the part of youth is delayed to or finds more complete opportunity for expression in the college period; and as the putting off the declaration of independence to a more mature moment adds the weight of intellectual aggression to the force of the student revolt, so much the more deadly it becomes to the self assurance of those in authority. The whole effort of the university, then, is concentrated on one object, namely, the stifling of independent thought and action on the part of its student body. To bulwark this defensive attitude, an elaborate system of checks has been instituted: the lecture system; athletics, with its tendency to release opposition in the form of semi-savage play; fraternities, with their social discipline and personal unrestraint; rallies, in which the

individual mind is smothered by the emotions of an organized mob; above all, the encouragement of "college spirit," by which is signified, really, the encouragement of universal conformity; all this accompanied by a ferocious and relentless campaign against the dissenter. It is obvious that under any such Byzantine system of education the words "freedom" and "free speech" lose all significance. Indeed, those who mention the foundation thoughts of our republic are so conscious of their present vacuity of meaning that they hasten to qualify the expressions by the phrase "but not license;" freedom, in short, to repeat what is not worth mentioning, but no license to promulgate an untrammelled idea.

We are reminded that during the Augustan age, the worthy Romans were scrupulous in their observation of the forms and titles of the defunct republic!

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## The Gentlemen's Home Journal

OW unfortunate it is that there is no Bachelor's Digest or Men's Home Journal! There is certainly need of an exclusively male periodical which does not treat entirely of business, farming, or prize-fighting. The women discuss birth-control and baby-raising from their personal viewpoint, why should not men discuss birth-control and baby-raising in some open forum from their point of view? Most men insist, perversely enough, on tying themselves down to a house and family, and persist in the attempt to do it blindly and ignorantly. They seem to think that business is their metier, and that the Home is their wife's metier, failing to realize that they are responsible for both. Fathers should spend the evenings around the old base-burner and the hot-air register reading how to raise children instead of how to raise dogs, and Fathers will not do it as long as such literature is printed in canyons of lingerie illustrations and odorono advertisements. This is a crying need in America today and also a piece of constructive criticism. Opposition party please note.

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# The Serpent Tells the Story of Her Poisoned Teeth

By Leonide Andreyev.

Hush, hush, hush. Come closer. Look into my eyes.

I was always a wonderful creature, silken, sensitive, and humble. And wise. And noble. And so dexterous in the contortions of my body that you will be elated to watch its motions: I wind myself into rings, flash my scales, encircle myself in tenderness, and with satiny frigid caresses multiply my steely body. One in a multitude! One in a multitude! Hush, hush. Look into my eyes.

You do not like my swayings and my frank, forward gaze? . . . Ah, heavy this head of mine, and because of that do I sway silently. Ah, heavy this head of mine, and because of that do I stare, swaying. **Come closer.** Give me some warmth; with fingers caress my wary brow: in its contour you will discover the image of a cup into which flows wisdom, the dew of nightly flowers. When I sketch the air with curyes, I leave the tracery of spider-web designs, the interweaving of dreamed marvels, the conjury of silenced throngs, the unheard whiz of gliding railroad ties . . . . I am silent and I sway, I look and sway . . . . what is the strange weight that I carry?

**I love you**

I was always an amazing creature, loving tenderly those whom I loved. **Come closer.** Do you see my white, sharp, conjuring teeth? . . . . kissing I had bitten. Not painfully, no: a little. Tenderly, caressing, I bit a little, until the first bright drops, until the cry resembling laughter. That was very pleasant, you may be sure: otherwise they would not have returned for kisses, those whom I had kissed. Now I may kiss only once . . . how sad: only once. One kiss for each . . . how little for a loving heart, a sensitive soul yearning for the supreme fusion. But it is only I, the sad one, who kiss once and again must look for love;—he knows no other love: for him is indestructible, eternal, my one yielding, bridal kiss. I tell you this in confidence; and when I end my story . . . . I shall kiss you.

**I love you.**



Look into my eyes. Is it not true my gaze is splendid, mighty? And hard. And straight. And keen, like steel that is held at the heart . . . . I look and sway, I look and charm, and gather your fear within my emerald eyes, and your loving, weary, humble grief. **Come closer.** Now I am the queen, and you dare not disregard my beauty; but there was a strange time . . . . Ah, what a strange time! The memory of it stirs me . . . . ah, what a strange time! I was not loved. I was not honored. With cruel fierceness was I persecuted, enslaved, derided . . . . ah, what a strange time! One in a multitude! One in a multitude!  
**I tell you, come closer!**

Why was I not loved? Then also was I a wonderful creature, unangered, tender, dancing exquisitely. But I was tortured. Branded with flames. Coarse and heavy animals crushed me with dull treads of callous, heavy hoofs; cold fangs and bloody snouts rent my tender heart asunder . . . and in impotent misery I bit the sand, swallowed the dust of the earth, dying in despair. Every day I died beneath their hoofs. Every day I died in despair. Ah, what a horrible time! The dull forest has forgotten and will never remember; but you will pity me. **Come closer.** Pity me, the insulted one. The sad one. The loving one. Who dances beautifully.  
**I love you.**

How could I have defended myself? I had only white, sharp, conjuring teeth . . . . and these were for kisses only. How could I have defended myself? . . . . It is now that I carry this terrible weight on my neck and now that my gaze is commanding and straight; but then light was my head and my eyes looked timidly. Then I did not have the poison. Ah, heavy this head of mine and difficult to hold. Ah, I am weary of my gaze: two stones in my head, these are my eyes. What if these glistening stones are precious! . . . . a heavy burden, they that took the place of gentle eyes; they press my brain . . . . heavy this head of mine! I gaze and sway, in the green mist I see you . . . . you are so far **Come closer.**

Look: even in grief am I beautiful, and languid with love is my gaze. Look into this pupil: I narrow it and widen it, and give it a singular sheen—the twinkling of stars, the iridescence of jewels . . . . green chrysolites, yellowing topazes, bloodred rubies. Look into my eyes: it is I, the queen, yoked to a crown; and this which sparkles, flames, and falls, ensnaring your senses, your will, your life—it is poison. It is a drop of my poison.

..... How it had happened? I do not know. I bore no hate to any living thing.

I lived and suffered. Kept silence. Shrouded myself in mystery. Hid myself hastily whenever I could, crawled hurriedly. But they did not see me weep; I know not how to weep; faster and more gorgeous became my silent dance. Alone in the silence, alone in the depths with sorrow in my heart I danced. They loathed my whirling dance and would have murdered me, the dancer. And suddenly my head began to droop with weight . . . . how strange! . . . . my head began to droop with weight. Still the same small and beautiful, wise and beautiful, it suddenly became terribly heavy, to earth leaned my throat, pained me. Now I am accustomed to it, but at first it was awkward and painful. I had thought myself ill.

And suddenly . . . . **Come closer. Look into my eyes. Hush, hush, hush** . . . . And suddenly my gaze drooped heavily, became torpid and strange . . . . and frightened me! I want to glance and look away—and cannot: I look ahead and plunge my keen glance deeper, and seem to petrify. **Look into my eyes.** I seem to petrify and all I gaze on turns stony. **Look into my eyes. I love you**

Once I had bathed in the shining mire of the forest—I like to be clean, it is a sign of noble birth, and I bathe frequently. And bathing, cavorting on the water, I saw my image and, as always, fell in love. I love the beautiful and the wise! And noticed that on my brow among the other ornaments appeared a new, strange sign . . . . is it from this the heaviness, the stoniness of my gaze, the sweetish taste within my mouth? Here darkens the cross on my brow, here—look! **Come closer.** Is it not strange? But then I did not understand, although it pleased me: another ornament will do no harm. But that same day, that very day, the day when the cross had appeared, my first kiss was my last—mortal became my kiss. One in a multitude! One in a multitude!

Ah!

You little precious stones, but think, beloved: how much more precious a drop of my poison. It is so small—have you ever seen it? Never, never. But you will recognize it. Think, beloved: how much of suffering of heavy insults, impotent indignation, self-consuming, had I to endure to give birth to this small drop. I am the queen! I am the queen! In one drop to which I give birth I carry death for every living thing; and my realm is limitless, as is humil-

iation, as is death. I am the queen! My gaze unyielding!  
My dance terrible! I am beautiful! One in a multitude!  
One in a multitude!

Ah!

Do not fall. I have not finished yet. Come closer. Look  
into my eyes.

And then I crept into the torpid forest, into my green  
realm. Differently, terribly. I was gentle, like a queen; and  
kindly, like a queen. I bowed to either side: right, left.  
And they . . . ran! Graciously, like a queen, I greeted:  
right, left—and they, silly ones, ran. What do you think:  
why did they run? What do you think? **Look into my eyes.**  
You see there some sort of sheen and light?—these are the  
rays of my crown which blind your eyes: you become petri-  
fied, you are lost. Presently I shall dance my last . . . do  
not fall. I shall wind myself into rings, flash my scales,  
encircle myself in the tendernesses, and with satiny frigid  
caresses will multiply my steely body. Here I am! Accept  
my only bridal kiss—it holds the deathly grief of all crushed  
lives. One in a multitude! One in a multitude!  
**Bend toward me. I love you.**

Die!

(Translated from the Russian by Charles Goodman.)

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## Silences

By Paul Tanaquil.

"Silences are very rare  
In a woman's life!"  
I was told this, in despair  
By a man who loves his wife.

I thought: "Silly fool to listen!  
Sillier fool, again, to care  
What she says, while dim lights glisten  
In a woman's hair . . . ."



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# On the Development of a Moustache

By Holling C. Holling.

The oval of my face, if not feminine,  
Yet surely shows the indecisive contour  
Of boyishness.

This should not be!  
For, presumably  
I am a man.

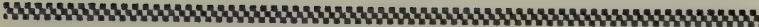
There is, however, a certain lack of virility  
In the outline  
Which places me beyond the pale  
Of obvious pithy manhood.  
Lord knows I do not lack  
Virility, vitality or vigor;  
But of what use is it  
To a sensitive, self-conscious person  
If the Lord knows, but not the butcher  
With whom I must deal in tones of finality?  
There's but one way out, one breeze  
To blow away the fumes of green despair:  
I will, if possible,  
Grow a moustasche . . . .

## Part One

Three whole days; I feel my entire being  
Trembling with sprouting life,  
I feel my face pregnant  
With life germinating minutely  
Behind drawn curtains—  
Life turning on its back and kicking  
Behind my upper lip.

## Part Two

A week . . . .  
Yea, weak is the subtle term!  
There have appeared  
Not small pen-lines . . . .  
Not even a smudge of charcoal, but  
A faint haze noticeable  
As, on an etching-plate held to the light  
The frowsy burr of fine stipple  
Timorously done.



### Part Three

One hair emerges . . . .  
Oh, the delicacy of its curve!  
By pouting and by gazing cross-eyed  
I can almost see it!  
O Samson, crawfish hither from beneath the bricks  
Fallen on thy temple from the Temple:  
O Esau, leave the reeking carcas of thy kill  
Wipe thy gory knife upon thy hairy buttock  
And sneak me-ward . . . .  
Is it not a thing of beauty?  
Wert thou, Sam, more fully delighted when  
You found three hairs would reach your double chin  
And you went out and slew your neighbor's bull  
In token of elation?  
Or Esau, wert thou more pleased when on that day  
You lay before your father's tent  
And he wiped his feet on your back, thinking  
You were the new door-mat your mother made  
From the hide of the dead camel in the barnyard?  
I can call you both to witness:

### Part Four

More days have dwindled on . . . .  
But do you know, somehow I feel  
It isn't such a success after all . . . .  
It doesn't wave in the summer breeze  
Like long grasses on a knoll . . . .  
It isn't even as a tuft of moss  
Thick-rooted to a rock  
It is like an oat-field sparsely oated only,  
Haggard blades because the ditches do not run . . . .  
People think I have forgotten  
To wash my face properly . . . .  
And when I ordered a steak for Sunday,  
The butcher roared like a stuck bull . . . .

### Part Five

O History!  
O gentle tabulator of lost causes and dispeptic constitutions,  
O pensive penner,  
Of things that have piffled;  
You who have seen Egypt evaporate,  
Babylon bungled  
And Rome's glory rinsed away in the wash,  
Proceed with these final lines:  
"She didn't like it,  
So I cut it off!"

## The Seven Major Portable- Typewriter Adventures



UNTIL the Corona Company has neglected to advertise the most potent joys to be gained from its annual crop of tin babies. What could be more hilarious than the following sedentary pastimes? . . .

1. Anonymous letters. This is considered the lowest form of wit and the most disgraceful form of revenge. What better recommendation could it have?

2. For diaries, love letters, drinking songs, business letters, and similar incriminating evidence, the typewriter should be used WITHOUT signatures.

3. Letters to publishing houses and beyond into the mystic land of famous men. True, they do not always get your letters, or answer them. Ben Hecht was in jail when a note of mine arrived in Chicago, and Shakespeare had died before I wrote the long epistle to Stratford. These can be dashed off with the left hand while one is reading the admired book in the other.

4. Articles for the LAUGHING HORSE, where you can say what you darn please. Both hands should be used in this case.

5. Poems. The typewriter is recommended in this instance for persons who are not poets. Any non-poet knows how embarrassing it is to have his attempts discovered by unsympathetic friends in unmistakable hand-writing.

6. To use up the stationery given you for Christmas. Double space and make wide margins to facilitate output.

7. Books and articles about war, love, babies and the like. All authorities agree that the notes for such writings should be taken, and as much as possible of the text written on the spot. Carry your machine with you on the battlefield, in the boudoir, the nursery and in the bath. Enos Mills claims to have written his articles on the subject of snow and landslides while sliding down mountains on them; and both Amy Lowell and Sinclair Lewis have typewriters on lap boards in their tubs.

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Is there anything sillier than solemnity? Have you ever taken setting up exercises naked and alone?



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# The Problem of Censorship

By Arthur Davison Ficke

(Author of "Sonnets of a Portrait Painter," etc.)

**"MORALS, Not Art Or Literature!"** We may indeed be grateful to the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice that it has so neatly summed up the issue and enabled us to divide ourselves into two camps between which no peace can ever be possible. That phrase, **MORALS, Not Art Or Literature,** has solidified the writers and other artists of America as nothing else could; for now we realize that we are combatting a blind, vulgar and ignorant force which would discard all the fruits of civilization, all the beautiful and sublime records of man's spiritual struggles, all the high moments of his intuitions of passion, if these or any part of them fail to accord with some pathetic, muddled, moral code which happens to be in fashion in some particular decade and country. We see clearly that we are back in the days of a fanaticism no less blind and brutal than that of the Huguenots who destroyed the precious mediaeval figures of saints in French church, or the Buddhists who shattered the marvelous carvings of Brahmanistic gods in Cambodian temples. And so, being quite unwilling to allow any group of men, in New York or elsewhere, to decide for us what part of the world's art or literature we shall make our own spiritual possession, we have gone to war with the believers in censorship, inspired by a conviction and a passion beside which the emotion of patriotism is a very pale ghost indeed.

Now, you may say that this is the biased view of a writer, and that it reaches only one side of the question. You may insist that you do not want any unreasonable or hampering censorship applied to literary works. All you want is such sane and wise and moderate control as will prevent the circulation of really obscene books; and if you are at all normal you will add that young and growing minds must be protected from dangerous influences in literature, in painting, and in the theatre.

I wish to take up this last point first—and, I hope, dismiss it for good. I want to get rid of that "protecting the young" argument. For no intelligent discussion of the question of censorship can take place so long as it remains

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entangled in our minds with the question of protection of children. The two subjects are utterly different. What children should see or read or hear is purely a question for parents, teachers and other natural guardians. The fact that these natural guardians are often careless cannot affect the principle involved. The principle is simply this—that the reading and theatre-going of mature adults cannot conceivably be limited to those things which are appropriate for children. The intellectual life of the world cannot be reduced to the narrow scope of those ideas which furnish good nourishment for immature minds.

Now let me go back to one of the objections to my point of view which I have assumed that you are raising. Let us grant for the moment that you maintain that all you want is a reasonable and wise censorship. What is a reasonable and wise censorship? I do not know. In fact I do not believe that there can be such a thing. I believe that unwisdom and unreasonableness are of the very essence of any censorship whatsoever.

The truth is that literature cannot be made "safe for democracy," any more than life itself can. The conduct of living men around us may inspire either to crime or to heroism, depending on what elements we choose to be our example. The infinite maelstrom of life streams by, commingled of things base and of things exalted: we respond to the touch of the one or of the other in so far as our natures permit us to do. It is a dangerous game, without any doubt; and certainly it is one that can never be made fool-proof. The same is true of literature. Until life changes its character into a thing of stainless morality, literature must reflect life with all its lights and shadows. You cannot make literature aseptic until you have made life aseptic, and no large-minded man would wish to do so.

Certainly in the present day it is towards too much interference that we are tending. In America more than any other country the vast ignorance of the mob is enforcing its passions and prejudices upon the life of individuals. Bad as this interference is in matters of conduct, such as prohibition, it is still worse when it invades the region of the mind and threatens to circumscribe our intellectual activities. And to shut us off from such books, pictures and plays as we may wish to see—to prescribe for us the sources from which we shall draw the intellectual stimulants we need—is so appalling a possibility that all other tyrannies seem mild in comparison. Yet this is exactly the point and purpose of a censorship.

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Back of all attempts at censorship there seems to me to be a queer misconception of the nature of the human mind. There is a lack of frankness in the facing of facts about human nature in all this censorship talk. And though I expect to displease some people by saying so, I wish to point out that one of the striking, perfectly natural, and wholly unchangeable traits of human nature is its delight in subjects which the world officially declares are improper and indecent. In other words, an unconscious and far from dignified hypocrisy pervades a great deal of our lives. Take one convincing example. Certainly everyone will grant that, in the long run, the demand of the public is what controls the newspapers. The newspapers print what the public insists on having printed. And so—doubtless much to the distaste of many an editor—we have, day after day and year after year, hundreds of columns devoted to Thaw cases and Stillman cases and Arbuckle cases. Does anyone honestly believe that these detailed accounts of the every slightest feature of sensational and lubricious events is in the papers for any educational purpose? And can anyone suggest any reason for their being in the papers except that the public hungrily loves to gloat over such matters?

There may lie on the living-room table, for all the family to read, newspapers containing bald accounts of events that would make the redoubtable Emile Zola squirm; yet let a novelist use similar events, more subtly expressed, as one element in the picture of a character or fate which he is drawing, and a great hue-and-cry arises. I wonder why it is. I can find only one explanation. It is that the respectable mind does not want to read through a long book for so little salacious matter, and so can safely try to suppress a form of lubricity that it personally has no use for. **The American policy is—**suppress the kinds of sensuality that you cannot use yourself. The great New York papers can print all they like of what Peeping Tom saw through the Stillman key-hole; but let an almost unknown magazine like the "Little Review" publish an almost incomprehensible "new art" story that analyzes Freudian sexual emotions in a style which not one of ten thousand readers could possibly read—then you get immediate prosecution. Perhaps one may summarize it all in this conclusion: the average man is lubricitious, and is ashamed of it, and so tries to convince himself that he is free from lubricity, by suppressing those forms of lubricity that are either too complex or too honest for his enjoyment.

I have been trying to suggest the reason why the **pater**







## Egon's Song from "Truth"

By George Sterling.

'T was far away, 't was far away,  
    Wild aloe of a night long past.  
'T was but an hour I held you fast,  
Who never saw your face by day.

'T was long ago, 't was long ago,  
    I kissed you through your loosened hair.  
    I knew that all had found you fair  
Until they found no more to know.

Far off, long since, we took our bliss,  
    Deluded to a brief embrace.  
    I, who remember not your face,  
Somehow cannot forget your kiss.

# The Death of Me

## A Farce Comedy in One Act

"The seriousness with which every dying man is treated has given many a poor devil his only moment of real triumph and enjoyment."

(The curtain slowly rises to the solemn strains of Handel's "Largo." The stage is hung with draperies shading from light grey, lavender, and mauve in the foreground to deep purple, almost black in a far distant background. A vast throng, such as can be adequately represented in the drawings of Winsor McCay or Art Young, reaches from a bedside in the foreground, losing itself in infinite distance off stage. The solemn music of the "Largo," and the throng's attitude of hushed and reverent but poignant sorrow make short work of the preliminary restlessness of the audience, for it is apparent that the stage is set to represent the passing of a great and good man. At this point it becomes both futile and inartistic not to admit that the great and good man is none other than myself, and the vast throng comprises my family, friends and disciples, with a sprinkling of doctors, newspaper men, coroners, competing morticians, and perhaps one or two others whose interest in the scene is professional rather than personal. The orchestral music dies away, to be succeeded at times by occasional chords of "Oh Paradise, oh Paradise!" or "Hark, hark, my soul!" from off stage, and raising my hand in a manner that leaves scarcely a dry eye in the house, I speak.)

I: Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity! Draw round my bed; is Anselm keeping back?

(Anselm, the only one of my illegitimate sons whose name I can remember, emerges from the crowd. Anselm, it appears, is a solemn clergyman, and his appearance is sweetly spiritual, like the photographs of David Belasco.)

Anselm: (after the fashion of the jeune premier in the "High Cost of Loving"): Father! (then recollecting himself, commencing to read from a beautifully artistic illuminated missal): "Man that is born——"

I: (rudely, it must be admitted, even for a dying man): For Heaven's sake Anselm, cut out that silly and superstitious hokum! It's bad enough having the life torn out of me, without having it bored out of me as well.



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Anselm: Perhaps, sir, you had rather——

I: I decidedly would rather. At least, if you must introduce these irrelevant and maudlin observations, have the decency to refrain until I can no longer be inconvenienced by them.

Anselm: (the man making a heroic endeavor to break through the cleric): Pshaw, sir, of course——

I: Of course it's Shaw; what of it? I guess he cribbed enough effective lines in his lifetime not to mind if I steal one or two of his for my deathbed. (Relenting). Oh Absalom, my son, my son Absalom—I mean Anselm—I suppose you think your dying father a wicked blaspheming old infidel, don't you?

Anselm: Oh no, sir, of course not. The (he is going to add something about the God of peace who brought again from the dead, etc., etc., but with the clarity of insight common to dying men, I divine the trend of this remark, and again hastily interrupt.)

I: Anselm, I suppose you want me to die in peace, don't you?

Anselm: Oh, father, how can you ask such a question? Certainly.

I: Well, then, if you don't consider me a wicked blasphemer and all the rest of it, please do so at once. I wouldn't have an easy moment the rest of my life if I thought you were going to make a sweet example of holiness of me, and have my soul leave my body in the arms of the church and similar rubbish. I know that's a recognized stunt among the profession, and it may have worked with Voltaire and Bob Ingersoll and H. L. Mencken, but it's a dirty trick just the same, so don't try it on me. And, furthermore—well, this is the first and last time in my life when I'll ever be taken really seriously, and I propose to take full advantage of it. So don't you try to hog the lime-light. I had a clergyman play that trick on me once, too—I might just as well not have been there at all; he was just a little bit worse about it than the bride.

Anselm: But you called me——

I: I know it. I want to leave my bequest to the church in your hands.

Anselm: A bequest! Bless——

I: Bless hell! Wait till you see it; it isn't money. (I extract a bulky manuscript from my pillows). Here! the great work of my lifetime—my revision of the marriage ritual. Really, you know, Anselm, the church needs this

sort of thing badly. I think if it were put into common practice you'd soon have a great religious renaissance. As things stand at present, there are two things only in the entire service that a civilized man or woman can stomach—Mendelssohn's music and the Lord's Prayer. The rest of it is terrible; when it isn't just stupid, it's disgusting and indecent. But here, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Good-bye. (Anselm retires, somewhat crestfallen, but crestfallen still in a sweetly spiritual way). Where's Helen?

My Secretary: She's not here, sir. I rang her up as you told me, but she said she couldn't be bothered. She said she didn't see any sense in deathbed scenes anyway, and when it came to getting up at two in the morning, she thought it was silly.

I: Well, I bet she's sorry just the same. Still, I suppose she is a little peeved at me for not making it on Thursday. (This joke is over the heads of most of the audience, but on the stage there are a few brief snickers, among which I detect the ironical laughter of my wife.)

I: Sweetheart.

My Wife: Yes, dear?

I: Is there plenty of wood in the house?

My Wife: Yes, I think so, dear. Why?

I: I was just wondering. I suppose you're going to burn yourself alive on my funeral pyre?

My Wife: I certainly am not. The only other thing that's going to be burnt is that horrid set of Nietzsche you gave me on our fiftieth anniversary.

I: Oh, all right, all right. I just wanted to know. And now about my ashes. I know you said you'd take them up to the top of Mount Tamalpais and scatter them to the breezes that whirl past the Golden Gate, far out to the blue ocean, the Pacific. But of course that was quite a while ago, and I don't see any sense in keeping promises if it's going to be too much trouble. So, if it is going to be too much trouble, perhaps you'd better just mail them parcels post to the headwaiter at the tavern up there. He won't know what it's all about, but the effect will be the same, anyhow. (Three real estate agents for low-priced suburban cemetery lots withdraw, uttering low, piteous moans.) And now about the insurance money.

My Wife: Oh, don't talk about it. Don't mention it.

I: That really isn't quite the right way to look at it, dear. I should be the one to say "Don't mention it." You're supposed to say "Thank you," see, and then of course I

say "Don't mention it." Well, anyway, don't spend it sensibly. I think the best thing to do would be to buy that cut-down racer you've been wanting for years. I wouldn't trust my life to your driving, but my life insurance is a different proposition, of course. (Several witnesses shake their heads dubiously in mute protest, appalled by such a shocking display of financial irresponsibility and moral depravity. Creditors of my estate, of course.) Yes, I think that's really quite the best plan. That way, you'll be able to pick up a second husband quicker, too, probably.

My Wife: But I don't want a second husband. I—

I: Oh yes, you do; all happily married people are expected to marry again. But there are one or two things about it I think you ought to consider. In the first place, you never could stand one that was too hirsute, so I think you ought to investigate that angle rather carefully before coming to a decision—

My Wife: You are both ribald and obscene, and if you weren't so near dead, I'd divorce you.

I: (Regarding this remark with the same studious attention that one gives to a street car conductor's plea to move up forward): And, of course, after I am—hm—dead, you mustn't wear mourning. You must put on your brightest dresses—

My Wife: That red one? (in a tone that implies that mourning, for a change, would be infinitely preferable, not to say more becoming.)

I: Yes; and if it's not asking too much, I wonder if you couldn't possibly arrange to make the change here on the stage? It really would lend a lot of piquancy to the scene, and besides, if you left to change, a lot of yaps in the audience would be sure to think you had departed to kill yourself. I hate having my dramatic purposes misinterpreted. And, well—goodbye, dear, it hasn't been such a bad two hundred and seventy years, has it?

My Wife: Agh, you're a bore. You've got Bernard Shaw on the brain so much you think everything he said was true. You even believe that nonsense about living three hundred years.

I: (Ever more wearily): Oh well, my error. Dying delusions, I guess—it seemed—Ah, I'm tired of those tunes; can't they play something else? Have they play "For All the Saints"—you know—I sort of like the darn thing.

(The off-stage music, joined by the orchestra, swells in the strains of "For All the Saints," commencing quite faintly.

but rising crescendo until the "Allelulia!" at the end fairly rocks the foundations of the building. Meanwhile, as the music rises, the lights fall, till at the end, there is only one pure ray of dazzling white light pouring down on my face, which shines resplendent, with a beautiful smile of infinite peaceful contentment resting mystically on my palid features.)

Some One: (After the manner of Tis in the Greek chorus, very omnisciently and impressively): Death is only the gateway to a more happy and beautiful existence than we have ever known.

I: (Opening my eyes abruptly): Blaa, blaa. Death is an acidosis.

(My eyes close for good this time, the curtain comes down with a swiftly indignant sweep, the lights flare up, and the orchestra strikes up a quick and jolly exit march. The audience, not knowing what to make of the play, decides it might as well go home.)

Dis- and Ex- Tinguished Poetry

(By Willard Wigginton)



YOUNG GIRL sat next to me yesterday on the train, reading a copy of "Ebony Flame," by Vincent Starrett. It is so extraordinary to see someone reading an intelligent book, that I began to watch her, and was surprised to see an increasing shadow of impatience and petulance creep across her face. Suddenly I became conscious of the woman who sat in front of me, who was talking to her companion in a penetrating and peculiarly annoying voice:

"Well she called me up that afternoon and asked me, but I said I didn't care. Of course I hadn't seen it yet, you know. And then Tom came over . . . I was still in the hospital at that time . . . and he said, no, there really hadn't anything been done except Ellen she thought that Charles had already told his wife about it. He had called up from the office about a week—no, it must have been just a day or two before I went to the hospital, because I was beginning to feel the effects of that stuff the doctor had give me—and I gave him to understand that I thought that he had no earthly business to"

Whereat the "Ebony Flame" was extinguished with a slap, and the young lady moved to the other end of the car!

Poets and Indians in Politics



NE of the most typical and Ballengerian, the most stupid and revealing fiascos of modern American politics, has just occurred in Washington. Secretary Fall, Senator Bursum, and many others seem to have been implicated in a gigantic and clever scheme to obtain valuable lands from the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. The bill was miraculously recalled from the House owing to a widespread protest resulting from investigations made by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and a better bill seems now about to pass the sleeping Houses.

Sixty-one artists and writers, including D. H. Lawrence, Stephen Graham, Zane Grey, Emerson Hugh, Vachel Lindsay, Witter Bynner, Mary Austin, Maxfield Parrish, Edgar Lee Masters, Stewart Edward White, William Allen White, Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Fremont Older, Carl Sandburg and countless other notorious scribblers and painters, wrote and signed a protest which got them into every newspaper and magazine in the country, and the atrocity was stopped. Even Warren Gamaliel woke up and Secretary of the Ulterior Fall was asked to resign. "The pen is mightier" . . . et cetera. Fall said there would be armed resistance if the Bursum Indian Bill failed to pass!

But the manifesto of all these noted writers is not half so good or convincing, either as a piece of prose or as a protest, as the succinct and naive letter written by the Acoma Indians on the same subject! Compare the following document with the famous letter of the writers which appeared in the "New Republic," November 18, 1922:

"The Acomas held here, this 13th of November, at Acomita, in the year 1922, a meeting; there met the Chief of Acoma and all of his principal men and his officers. Willingly we will stand to fight against the Bursum bill, which by this time we have discovered and understood.

"Our white brothers and sisters: This bill is against us, to break our customs, which we have enjoyed, living on in our happy life.

"It is very much sad, indeed, to bear, and to know, and to lose our every custom of the Indians in this world of men.

"Therefore we are willing fully to join to the others our Pueblo, where we may beat out the Bursum bill for the benefit of our children and of our old people and of all our

future.

"We have held a meeting, assembling yesterday in the school house all day long. The meeting was very good. Every person was sworn and each did say that he is willing to help right along from now on.

"Yes, sir, we are all glad to do so to help through the name of our great God and to help those who are trying to stand for us, our American honorable people.

"This is all very much appreciated, and thanks for the help, and signed with all our names: we the chiefs of said Acomas."

What is Law?



UCKLE in his "History of Civilization" tells us that "every great reform which has been effected has consisted, not in doing something new, but in undoing something old. The most valuable additions made to legislation have been enactments destructive of previous legislation; and the best laws which have been passed have been those by which some former laws have been repealed."

It might be well to ask then who makes the law and who abolishes it? What is this thing we call law? Almost the first words which Sir William Blackstone used in his "Commentaries" are these:

"Law is that rule of action which is prescribed by some superior and which the inferior is bound to obey."

Law, therefore, depends upon there being a superior and an inferior, and, moreover, it depends on the superior being above the law. He, the superior, Blackstone tells us, in another place, has "laid it down." Now, if he has laid it (the law) down, it must certainly be below him, and equally he must be above it. And here comes in a great truth, viz: a superior being above the law is not bound by it; it is the inferior only who is bound. Therefore, we may justly define law as a rule of action laid down by a superior and which the inferior only is bound to obey.

"Considering," says Blackstone, a little further along, "the Creator only as being of infinite power, he was able unquestionably to have prescribed whatever laws he pleased to his creature, man, however unjust or severe. But, as he is also a being of infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such laws as were grounded in those relations of justice that

existed in the nature of things antecedent to any positive precept. These are the immutable laws of good and evil, to which the Creator himself in all his dispensations, conforms, and which he has enabled human wisdom to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions. Such, among others, are these principles: (1) that we should live honestly, (2) should hurt nobody, and (3) should render everyone his due: to which three general precepts Justinian has reduced the whole doctrine of law."

To elaborate this idea, man has created a system of jurisprudence which may be divided under two heads: (1) the law of morals, and (2) the law of things. These two are in eternal conflict. How can the law of morals ever be fulfilled while its precepts are being broken by a conventional submission to the law of things? The law of morals cannot be thought of by any one who is obeying the law of things; in which case the law of morals is an unknown quantity without the fulfillment of the law of things, which exists only for the protection of and to sustain a system which is certainly unmoral if we are not fully prepared to declare it positively immoral.

The Question of Dress



THE LADIES (mostly) and gentlemen in a certain western town who aspire to contribute their quota to the annual short-story output, were organized some time ago by an ambitious Mrs. Kennicot, as the Genius Club. Shortly after Christmas of this year they gave a gala meeting which each member attended in a costume representing some recent book. There were many Bright Shawls, several Glimpses of the Moon, and even Certain People of Importance there, but a subscriber to THE LAUGHING HORSE, one of the more daring spirits of the club, represented the privately printed Hecht novel, "Fantazius Mallare," the review of which in the last HORSE caused so much talk. The cover of the December LAUGHING HORSE will explain why the membership of the club is now so meagre. It is said that there are two factions among the remaining Genii—those who want only ladies in the future, and those who want only gentlemen and ladies as members.

The Horse that Laughs Seriously

EDITORIAL NOTE:—The following mellow editorial, apparently from the pen of some Oxford don, or at least some ancient American sage, was found in the columns of the Daily Palo Alto of Stanford University.

"The blase young sprigs at the University of California who have aroused the active and enthusiastic opposition of fellow students through the intemperate utterances of their magazine, THE LAUGHING HORSE, are probably happier than they have been since they started in to demonstrate that they can find little in life to their satisfaction and nothing worth mentioning in their university. The joy of poking bitter fun at everything lies in getting somebody angry about it; the sparkle of the pleasure is dulled if nobody takes it seriously. Probably the remark that has hurt them most in all that has been said came from one of their supporters who protested that the magazine was satirical in its purpose and was not to be taken too seriously. Not to be taken seriously! That would remove the zest from the enterprise. What would be the point in calling everybody names and jeering at everything unless somebody took it seriously?

"These young radicals are for the most part suffering from mental and spiritual indignation, and will recover as they get a little more experience with the world and learn to do something real instead of turning things over and over inconclusively in their minds. They think they have tasted all of life, some of them, and have found that all of it is ashes in the mouth, bitterness and vanity. All the childish exuberance and enthusiasm of the ordinary young men and women in college are really pathetic to them, who perceive the futility of such optimistic spirits. All the platitudes of the professors are exasperating to them who seek the stark truth, though it may not be so pleasant to spirits less sturdy.

"College loyalty, all the ordinary, natural spontaneous customs of life and youth, all the amenities and conventions, these world-weary youngsters have found empty and useless, to be disregarded and spurned.

"They make a holy show of themselves and of their university, and some of them will sometime be a little ashamed of their exhibition. Those are the really sound ones who shoot off in the wrong direction because they really do try to do some thinking, but go a little too far for their age

and experience. Those of them who are tainted at the core will keep on and become as much nuisances in later life as their ability makes possible. That is, they will never grow up.

"Of course, the little group that has produced THE LAUGHING HORSE, and got into the newspapers and into jail for a few moments is not typical of the great bulk of students of the university. Nobody thinks it is. But while they themselves hold that they are far superior to the poor fish who take what teacher tells them seriously and bubble over in youthful enthusiasm, men and women who know life more deeply than they do in spite of their certainty that they know it to its darkest bottom, perceive that they are not superior and not so wise and open-eyed to realities as they imagine, but blinded for the moment by the fact that they have been looking upon their own growing selves a little too intently."

The Last Laughters



PERHAPS no group of people, either foreigners or our own crop of young complainers, extracts so much enjoyment out of the ludicrous spectacle of American civilization as the American Indians.

How quietly and hugely they are amused by our silly clothes, our ridiculous manners, our unbelievable conceit!

Nothing could be funnier than the sight of a wealthy prude of a woman in the midst of (say) a Hopi village in Arizona—and the natives laugh the loudest! They guffaw openly at her mincing ways and her hideous skirts—or trousers, whichever she happens to wear; and laugh almost as loud at her husband, though he wear a sombrero and puttees, overalls, or a tweed suit. It is yet to be recorded whether an Indian (untainted by contact with Americans) would burst or simply have spasms in the presence of evening clothes. Even a derby hat might prove disastrous.

If a reversion to primitive beauty and simplicity in manners and clothes can only come about as a reaction to extremism, let us all become Ezra Pounds and Whistlers, wearing jade ear-rings and cerise velvet trousers to hasten the revolution!

Why not adopt the real American dress—that is, the Amerindian—at once, and have done?



SOME PEOPLE think we publish the LAUGHING HORSE to propagate cynicism, to reform stupid asses, to broadcast Russian revolutionist ideas, to slay naughty dragons, or to liberate adolescent youths from the tyranny of institutions.

Those same people make me sick at my stomach.

Why can't they conceive of doing a thing for the fun of it; of writing for the love of the art, and not always assume that when one criticises or hoots, he is imbued with the wild passion to repair the broken and scattered pieces of God's rather unsuccessful creations.

"Journalism is of so little value," says Ambrose Bierce, "that it may be used for anything." And literature is of so much value that it transcends usefulness and becomes something of eternal worth.

Surely all our work may be classed under one of those two heads. If we have attained anything of literary worth (and we have certainly published work by literary artists of high repute), then give us credit for it. And if we have cluttered many pages with mere journalistic acrobatics, why not take it as such, laugh with us, and look anxiously for the next number? Nine chances out of ten, if you or your ideas have been given the horse-laugh in Number 4, your opponent and his ridiculous attitudes will receive a louder guffaw in Number 5.

And don't, for the love of Michael the Archangel, accuse us of a purpose, other than the desire to write what we want to write in the way we want to write it!

AMERICAN IDEALS

"They are inspiring words—American and ideal; it was not by chance that this Company chose them to designate its products. They were chosen as a solemn pledge that this country where men are born 'free and equal' should be the best warmed country in the world."—Advertisement for the American Radiator Company.

To a Lady Who Returned Our Subscription Blank Unsigned:

Must you clean out your stables minutely

To make room for the automobiles?

Though the Horse only laughs at it mutely—

Just think how the editor feels!